

THE RAIL and the GAME

A STORY OF MOUNTAIN RAILROAD LIFE

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

AUTHOR OF "WHISPERING SMITH," "THE MOUNTAIN DIVIDE," "STRATEGY OF GREAT RAILROADS," ETC.

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SYNOPSIS.

Little Helen Holmes, daughter of General Holmes, man, is rescued from imminent danger on a scenic railroad by George Storm, a new boy. Grown to young womanhood Helen meets a spectacular double trouble of Storm, now a freight fireman, and of her father and his friends. A Rhinelander, financier, and Robert Seagrue, promoter, form a threatened collision between a passenger train and a runaway freight. Seagrue's breakers employed by Seagrue and Capelle, his lawyer, interrupted by Helen while stealing General Holmes' survey plans of the cut-off line for the Tidewater, fatally wound General Holmes and escape. Storm and Helen chase the murderers on a light engine and capture them. Spike has hidden the plans and manages to inform Seagrue where they are cached. Her father's estate, badly involved by his death, Helen rises to work on the Tidewater. Seagrue helps Spike to break jail and uses him to set fire to a powder train hauled by Storm's engine. Helen saves Storm from a horrible death. Her father's death, the survey plans from Seagrue, and though they are taken from her, finds an accidentally made proof of the survey blue print.

FIFTH INSTALLMENT.

The Fight at Signal Station.

The day operator at Signal station could hardly have been more peacefully engaged than she was at the moment George Storm threw open the office door and paused on the threshold.

"What are you doing over here this morning?" demanded Helen of Storm.

"Looking for a job."

"You might take mine," suggested Helen, lifting her eyebrows in a profession of sympathy.

"Whereabouts is that man Rhinelander?" asked Storm lazily. "Isn't he got some kind of a construction camp around this joint?"

"Why, how stupid of me not to have thought of Uncle Amos myself," exclaimed Helen. "Of course he has. And he's sure to have a job for you."

"He is sure," drawled Storm, "either to have a job for me or the best chance he ever had in his life to get licked—I give him his choice."

"Kind of you," retorted Helen; "he wouldn't mind getting 'licked,' of course, but he is short of men—I happen to know that."

"Maybe I'd better go over and give him a chance to hire me."

"Suppose I go with you."

Helen and Storm found Rhinelander hard at work. It was the first time he had seen Storm since the night on the launch and he greeted his visitor with a hearty laugh. "Lacked?" he echoed, after Helen had repeated her companion's threats. "Why, George, I could whip my weight in wildcats this morning. I'll have steel half way up the pass if I can get hold of a few cars of ties this week. And something always happens when I feel this way. I'll tell you right now, I've pointed a young fellow, either go to work there, or take a dressing down yourself."

"My hands are up," said Storm. "I'll go to work. What have you got?"

Rhinelander turned to his foreman. They took only a minute to confer. "Wood has a job for you right now," announced Rhinelander to Storm. "You are assistant foreman. Get busy to prove a busy one for the whole camp. Helen returned to the station and Storm went out with Wood—himself a veteran workman. The mailman came in presently with a letter for Rhinelander, advising him that a bid he had made for a large quantity of ties had been accepted. The first shipment was promised for Thursday.

Rhinelander called in Wood to hear the news. "Have the flying gang here tomorrow early, to the last man fack," directed Rhinelander. "Now that we've got a chance, let's make a killing."

Wood summoned Storm. "Put up the bulletin, George," directed Wood.

At Oceanville the directors of the road were in session. Capelle, representative of Seagrue, leader of the enemy camp in the cut-off race, learned from them that morning of the new construction credits granted to Rhinelander. In the directors' room there had been a stormy scene when Capelle denounced the action they had taken. But his angry mood came too late and he was forced to carry his wrath and the bad news out to Seagrue.

Storm lost no time in posting the bulletin. While he wrote it out men gathered about and one, in especial, read the announcement with keen, anxious eyes.

"Flying gang will be at Signal station at 9 a. m. to unload ties."

This one was Spike, Seagrue's spy in the Rhinelander camp. Restless, contentious, teeming with crooked instincts, as devoted to mischief as the devil to men, Spike printed the substance of the bulletin on his memory, and turning from the men around him left the scene. By a circuitous route which he habitually used in sneaking from one camp to the other Spike made his way to Seagrue's hut and reported what he had just read on the bulletin board.

Seagrue regarded him with amusement. "There are no more ties coming to Rhinelander," he explained, patiently. "His supplies are cut off."

Before Seagrue could say more there was a knock at the door and his foreman, Bill Delaney, appeared with Capelle. Seagrue lost no time in asking the news and Capelle, with the best face he could summon, told him how they had lost out on stopping Rhinelander's credit. Men that had known Seagrue a long time could never remember seeing him as angry as he was at that moment.

"Why wasn't the credit stopped," he demanded furiously, "as you said it was?"

Capelle answered bluntly: "Rhinelander's new credit was granted during my absence."

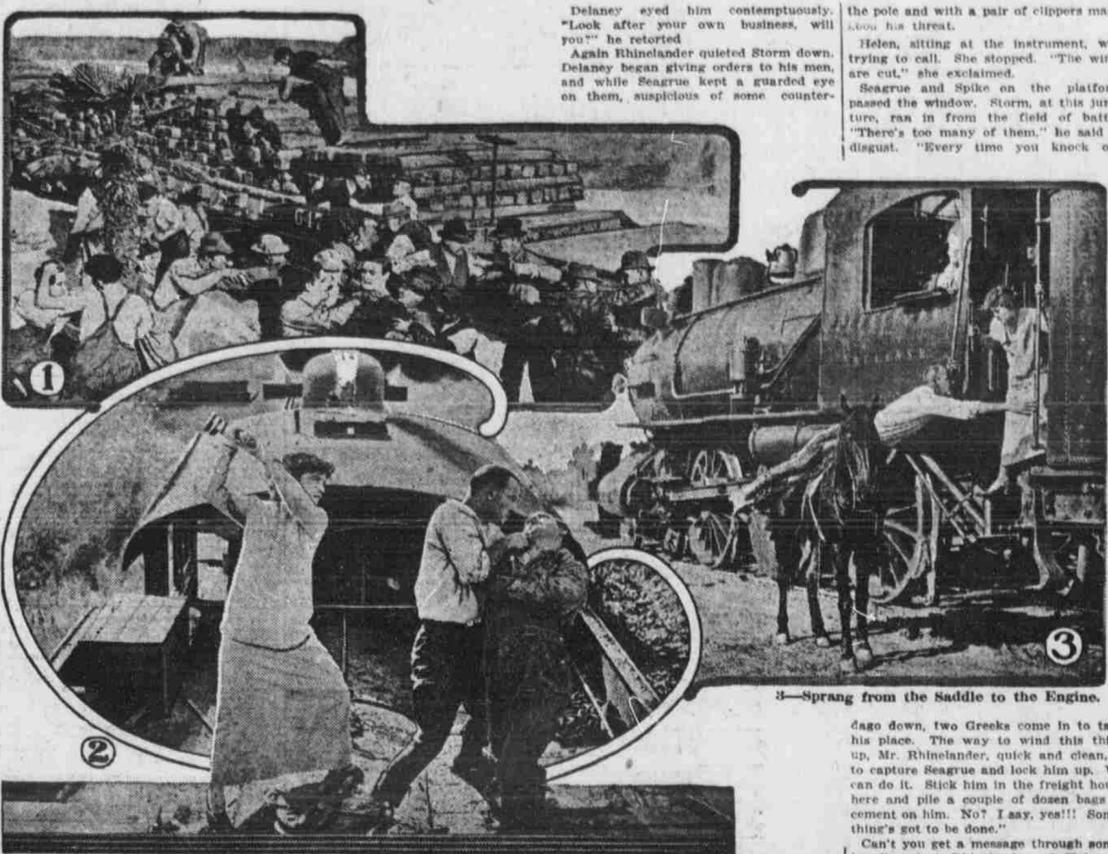
No explanation served to allay Seagrue's rage. He pointed wrathfully at Spike. "Tell him what you saw about ties."

While Capelle, humiliated, listened, Spike repeated once more the bulletin board message.

"Had you followed my instructions," cried Seagrue, regarding Capelle scornfully, "the ties would not have been furnished."

Capelle turned sullenly away, refusing to talk further. "I did the best I could," was all he would say.

Seagrue himself was in no mood to listen to excuses had there been any more to offer. Paving no more attention to Capelle's presence he whirled angrily on Spike. Few words were ever needed or exchanged between these two men.



1—Bedlam Was Let Loose. 2—Rapped the Convict Over the Head. 3—Sprang from the Saddle to the Engine.

"Those ties"—Seagrue looked significantly at his tool—"must never reach Rhinelander."

With a great deal of thought and very brief expressions, the two conferred apart. What they worked out no one knew. But a few moments later Seagrue gave Spike a liberal supply of money and Spike left the hut. Calling to Capelle, Seagrue resumed his abuse.

Spike, without delay, hastened to Signal station, bought a ticket from Helen and took the local passenger train for Oceanville. He had the day and the night before him to figure out schemes to pre-empt the delivery of the ties to Rhinelander, and by morning he had more than one ready.

The earliest one he tried first, and he might have been seen in the morning, early in the out-freight yards at Oceanville watching the make-up of the freight train that was to take the four cars of ties to Signal. He kept in the background every moment, but had continually within his eye the preparations to get the train under way. When at length the brakeman entered the caboose to place the waybills on the desk, Spike watched him closely, only taking care to get away before he was observed himself. Sneaking up toward the head end he caught sight of the conductor, and to avoid him dodged in between two box cars. But the conductor had seen him and scenting a knave summoned a yard policeman. The two descended on Spike with scant ceremony. The detective dragged him from his hiding place, questioned him, warned him, and marching him off shot him out of the yards on a goose step. But Spike, as strong for resources as a cat for lives, had only begun to work when he was ordered to "beat it." He did beat it, but to such good purpose that he got down to the bridge ahead of the freight train. When the train drew near, Spike handily boarded the head end.

Some moments later the hind end brakeman, sitting on the caboose, saw a tramp in the door of a box car. The brakeman started forward to investigate and had been able to see all that occurred just a moment later, he would also have seen the tramp clinging to the side of a car of ties removing Rhinelander's name from the billing card and substituting therefor the name of Seagrue.

One after another of the billing cards on the four cars of ties Spike manipulated in the same way. In the meantime the two brakemen, one of whom had caught a glimpse of him, were consulting as to how to get him. But by the time they had made their plans and were ready for a forcible laying on of hands Spike's work was done. Watching the trainmen walk forward, he dropped lightly from the last car and waiting for the caboose, which was empty, swung up by the hand rail and went inside the car. He grabbed the waybills from the rack box and examined them. Finding those for the cars of ties, he carefully erased Rhinelander's name from each of them and taking his time inserted Seagrue's. Having done what struck him as an artistic job on these, he replaced the bills and climbing into the cupola looked outside.

It was then by good fortune that the conductor and one of the two brakemen spotted him. To get back quickly they flagged the engineer—the train was going at a pretty good clip—and started for the side. But this suited Spike's own game, for as the train slowed he dropped off and the crew, thinking themselves well rid of a nuisance, signaled their engine man ahead.

The train was running not far from Beaman when Spike left it, and slipping into the woods adjoining the right-of-way he made his way as fast as he could up to the Beaman telegraph office, where he sent this message to Seagrue:

"Changed the two ties you thought Rhinelander wears for two that suit Seagrue."

"Say, where is the nearest livery stable in this place, mister?" Spike asked the agent.

He hardly waited to hear the answer given him before he was on his way out of the office. And without losing a minute he got a horse where he had been

directed for one and rode hastily away on it.

Helen, a few moments later, took Spike's message to Seagrue. When she handed it to Lyons he said he would deliver it. Placing the duplicate on file, Helen resumed her croquet work.

Passing the Tidewater camp, Lyons saw Rhinelander, Wood and Wood in conference over unloading the expected ties.

"You don't need me over at the station," said Wood to Rhinelander. "I'll send Storm with the men to look after the unloading. I'll stay here with these local graders."

Seagrue himself took the message from Lyons. He read it with secret satisfaction. The moment Lyons had left, Seagrue called Delaney, his foreman, told him to get the gang together to unload four cars of ties the instant the local freight pulled in. He calculated that possession of the ties would be at least the big end of the game in delaying the opposition.

But in the interval the Tidewater camp leaders, Rhinelander and Storm, were not losing any time in looking after the shipment themselves, and they appeared together at the station to get track of it. Lyons, in response to Rhinelander's inquiries, said he did not know what the local freight was carrying.

"You find out, will you, Helen?" asked Rhinelander. And as he made the request he showed her his letter advising him the ties would be on the local.

While Rhinelander, Storm, Helen and Lyons were thus engaged, Seagrue and his foreman, Delaney, entered the office. Seagrue seemed at his best, very affable and friendly with everybody, and was soon asking questions as to what they were coming for him that morning. Helen took his inquiries and Rhinelander, over-hearing, explained that the ties coming in on the local freight train that morning were for the Tidewater work, not for Seagrue. Seagrue declared him mistaken. A dispute flared up, which in a moment involved practically everybody in the room. Of these, the opposition base for the unloading jobs, Delaney and Storm, became the most heated and seemed about to come to blows. But Rhinelander, checking Storm's indignation, advised restraint and referred the whole thing to Helen, asking her to find the real fact out from the dispatcher. Helen sent a hurry-up message and the answer came from the dispatcher's office within a few minutes:

"Local will set out four cars ties at Signal for Rhinelander's construction gang. H. C. W."

Lyons, without comment, passed the message to Rhinelander, who read it and showed it triumphantly to Seagrue. Seagrue entered an emphatic dissent. "I don't care what those boots at Oceanville say," he snapped. "Those ties are for me and you'll find out I know what I'm talking about."

Fast words followed. Storm and Delaney again eyed each other fiercely. Then the sound of a freight train pulling in started everybody in the room out for the platform. The moment the train stopped the disputants crowded forward, each side eager to reach the conductor first. The conductor, a man of peace, listened unmoved to the violent contentions addressed to him. At length he produced the waybills for the property in dispute. Seagrue got hold of them and examined them first. To his delight he saw that, as expected, they read to him as consignees and he showed them with an injured air to Lyons. Rhinelander, reading the doctored bills over Lyons' shoulder, was confounded. He looked at Helen. There was no getting away from what the waybills said.

Seagrue meant to let nothing of his advantage slip for lack of action. He whirled on Delaney. "Get our ties off those cars, Bill, and do it quick."

Storm took a hand in. He felt his side was beaten, but would not quit. "Hold on," he said gruffly. "Not yet. This thing is in dispute. Take your time," he added to Delaney, and a significant look lent strength to his words.

Delaney eyed him contemptuously. "Look after your own business, will you?" he retorted.

Again Rhinelander quieted Storm down. Delaney began giving orders to his men, and while Seagrue kept a guarded eye on them, suspicious of some counter-

the pole and with a pair of clippers made a dash for it.

Helen, sitting at the instrument, was trying to call. She stopped. "The wires are cut," she exclaimed.

Seagrue and Spike on the platform passed the window. Storm, at this juncture, ran in from the field of battle. "There's too many of them," he said in disgust. "Every time you knock one

ago down, two Greeks come in to take his place. The way to wind this thing up, Mr. Rhinelander, quick and clean, is to capture Seagrue and lock him up. We can do it. Stick him in the freight house here and pile a couple of dozen bags of cement on him. No! Easy, yes!!! Something's got to be done."

"Can't you get a message through somehow?" asked Rhinelander of Helen in agitation.

"Yes," she answered, unhesitatingly. "I can. I'll get one through for you." So saying, she caught up an extra instrument, ran out on the platform and climbed the pole Spike had climbed, to cut in with her pony above the break.

Storm called into conference the handiest of his men—men who cared neither for the law nor the devil—and giving brief and hurried instructions, ran from the station at the moment that Seagrue with his outfit were rushing the outnumbered Tidewater sans.

Pushing straight through his own demolished forces to the thick of the scrimmage, knocking men right and left when he had to and dodging in between when he could, Storm, his two trustees at his elbows, struck above and jumped his way straight to where Seagrue was urging his fighting men on. The latter, busy with the main encounter, saw Storm too late. The engineer catching him by the collar whirled him unceremoniously around, pinioned him before a blow could be struck and with his helpers dragged him victoriously off.

Bedlam was let loose. Seagrue's men, seeing the trick too late, ran in with a yell to rescue him. Back and forth the fight averaged, while Helen above at the depot attached her instrument and sent to the dispatcher her hurry-up message.

"Seagrue has the ties. Send help, H."

But whoever had the ties, Storm had Seagrue, and his men were now easily standing off the onslaughts of Seagrue's men on the platform. The latter, needing help, sent for reinforcements, and a moment later the entire gang, leaving the unloading of the tie cars ran down the track to join in the fight. The train was left deserted. Storm, seeing this, turned his prisoner over to his men and chose a moment when he could break away to run to the engine. Gaining the cab, he immediately started to back the train up to Rhinelander's camp, where the main body of his men still were. As the train drew past the station, Helen, having finished, sprang recklessly from the pole to the top of a box car and running forward met Storm, who had started back, and showed him a message from the dispatcher:

"Will send sheriff to Signal."

While the men were still fighting in front of the station, Spike managed to tear himself loose from the fray in time to see the freight train backing up the hill. He knew what this meant and he used the moment to his advantage. Running to his horse he mounted and spurred after the receding train. But his intervention had turned the fighting in favor of Seagrue's men, and they were fast beating Rhinelander's gang off. By a sudden rush on the freight house they eye re-captured and released Seagrue himself.

The latter, covering the situation at a glance, saw, as Spike had seen, the real danger. Storm, now in possession of the ties, was running away with them.

Yelling to his men, Seagrue bade them drop the fight and follow. Spike on his horse was fast overtaking the train. Helen and Storm, watching from the cab, knew he would attempt any desperate expedient, but hardly expected what followed.

Running his horse close to the moving train, Spike sprang from the saddle to the engine itself and started back. As he came over the top of the cab, Storm on the tender confronted him and the two grappled. Helen had at once taken the throttle, but Spike, fighting Storm back into the cab quickly put him at a disadvantage. He was, in fact, overpowering him when Helen came to the rescue and rapped the convict smartly over the head. She jumped back to the engineer's seat in time to halt the train opposite Rhinelander's camp, and without losing a moment she ran over to headquarters, where she gave the alarm to Wood and asked him to hurry the remainder of the construction gang over to the train before the cars should be stolen again by their active enemies. Wood, who would rather fight than cat, responded like a whirlwind, and heading his men, started them

across the fields on the run for the kidnapped train.

Storm had, meantime, dropped a rope around Spike's neck. He tied him to the engine cab just as Helen, with her reinforcements, reached the tie cars and the men hurriedly began the unloading.

They were not to have an easy time of it. Seagrue, with his rioters, had already climbed the hill and was urging them forward. Not a soul on the engine had a weapon, and as Seagrue's men came on it looked as if the train would be taken then and there by force of numbers. Helen, however, was not without reserves. "Give them the live steam, George, and a lot of it, quick," she cried. "Don't let them capture us."

Storm needed no more than the hint. Turning on the valve he let loose a hot cloud that drove Seagrue and his gang gasping from the engine. The foremost of the men caught in the white fog were glad to get away unhurt, and halting at a safe distance rallied for orders.

Delaney, whose fighting blood was just getting warmed up, saw a further chance and called to his men to follow him around the cut. The gang divided and as to that single motive, which still fascinates him and which is sufficiently intoxicating to rally men in their thousands to the banner of one sole cause—that of murder.

War has millions of men at its heels; Christ has but twelve apostles. The centuries that are past have furnished various examples. In pilgrimage such as that of Compostella, some few men met year by year to fight together against their vices to strive to diminish them by the example of remorse, and thus to purify the atmosphere of life and of the duties imposed by honor.

The crusades gathered together in their thousands those heroes who were fired by an exalted goal, a noble ideal, to defend a faith—the sanctifier of their energies, their defense amid the sorrows of the earth, and the vehicle of a Bible which, in testaments Shakespearean in their crudity, laid bare the vices of that day, which are equally those of our own time—lust, drunkenness, pride and cupidity.

A few poets, that is to say, a few priests in their turn, formed brotherhoods to make war after their fashion on corruption, a summons for the restoration of abused bodies and souls, yet, though they called men to a life nobly interpreted and lovingly carried out, their recruits were but few in number, for the guermond was merely-happiness.

Far away by men, women have, by their complicity, added to the list of sins and sinners. Misery goes on playing its mechanical tune, while all humanity reels on its tragic dance in union, nor thinks to stay the faulty rhythm, the halting cadence of life; a life which excludes true happiness because men lack civility and altruism. It is they who have directed the sentimental influences and the moral forces of the world.

God had a special object in making the world "round"; it was in order that men might ever face one another, and that it might be impossible for them to misunderstand each other, flee from, or harm one another. A square world would have involved angles and corners of retreat, and God wished to give His work a form full of loving possibilities.

And the centuries have rolled on, bringing no cure for man's turbulent instincts. Naught has brought wisdom to man's evil heart—neither the cross of Christ, nor science, nor art, and no love of woman, of mothers or of children has availed to soften man's cruelty, and today, do men at last recognize that they are so unworthy of life that they ought to sort of anguinary indignation spur them on to kill each other, to diminish their number? What a terrible lesson! What a ghastly glimpse of the reality of the truth!

Oh, God! help us to understand how to read the secrets of the world, the mysterious force which disfigures and unmasks man and summons him imperiously to the sacrifices of earlier centuries. Is it an unconscious desire to purify the earth, to renew it and to please Thee, O God?

Is it Thine order will, Lord, or the discovery of their will? The fact that each of them recognizes the "necessity" of living after this war, after these murders, on a new basis, and the necessity of modifying "his way of life," of leading a new life—all these confessions, written and oft repeated, of our wickedness—have they reached even unto Thee? And have they not found grace in Thine eyes?

O Lord! if men have insulted life, Thy gift, and of a new era prepared by Thy love, like the coming of Thy Son upon earth, shall now lighten the world. O do Thou help us, the women, to second the accomplishment of Thy holy will!

O Lord, set forth before my sisters their new and imminent duties toward Thee and toward themselves.

They shall offer unto Thee as penance all the suffering of the ever-repeated

right and left, rounding up the stragglers and marching them down the cut. The hill had been won and lost, but the ties had been firmly held and were safely in Rhinelander's possession.

The moment the fight was decided, Storm, with Helen, went back to the engine to get their personal prisoner, the redoubtable Spike. They took him back to where the sheriff was giving his orders for the disposition of those under arrest. Helen explained to the sheriff very forcibly just what Spike had done.

"Well," demanded the official, jocularly, "what'll we do with him? String him up right here in a basket?"

"No," exclaimed Helen, indignantly. "You can do better than that." She pointed to Seagrue, now also under arrest. "Put those two men at work unloading these ties for our camp. They are the ringleaders in the whole affair. If they had their deserts, they would both be in the penitentiary. Make them work, sheriff. That's the last thing that pair want to do." Rhinelander came up with his men as she finished.

"You're right," declared the sheriff, good humored over the outcome. "From the looks of 'em, what those guys need is a dose of good hard work." He turned to his deputies and pointed to the ties. "Get those fellows up on the flat cars and see they both work every minute till the last tie is unloaded."

"Suppose they refuse to work," suggested a deputy.

"Refuse?" echoed the sheriff, savagely. "If they do, find a pump that'll work and give 'em the cold water."

But Seagrue and Spike did work. When Helen, Rhinelander and Storm left the scene the two, beaded with sweat, were pitching ties in record time.

(To Be Continued Next Monday.)

A Chapter of My Gospel of Patriotism

By YVETTE GUILBERT

This war! It is the failure of man, the proven failure of his civilization, the frank avowal that his poor instincts have remained in their brutal, primitive condition—the cruel, pitiless admission as to that single motive, which still fascinates him and which is sufficiently intoxicating to rally men in their thousands to the banner of one sole cause—that of murder.

War has millions of men at its heels; Christ has but twelve apostles. The centuries that are past have furnished various examples. In pilgrimage such as that of Compostella, some few men met year by year to fight together against their vices to strive to diminish them by the example of remorse, and thus to purify the atmosphere of life and of the duties imposed by honor.

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maternity which has been their lot since the beginning of the world!

They shall offer unto Thee all the tears which have been their lot since the world began!

They shall offer unto Thee all the sicknesses which have been their lot since the world began!

They shall offer unto Thee all the hopes which have been their lot since the world began!

They shall offer unto Thee their civilization, the only one that has been real since the beginning of the world!

They shall come to the aid of their pitiable husbands, their terrible brothers, their criminal sons, whom naught, O Lord, could make better, and who shall be forever, and who shall be forever branded with the seal of this bloodstained deluge which is their work.

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—621—

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